

ProDoc@DocEng—The Doctoral Consortium at the ACM Symposium on Document Engineering

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For the third time, the ACM Symposium on Document Engineering (DocEng) will include a Doctoral Consortium. This newsletter article briefly introduces the goals and the structure of the consortium. We also encourage PhD students to participate in the upcoming ProDoc@DocEng in September in Lausanne (Switzerland).

<http://www.doceng2015.org/prodoc>

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Steering Committee of the ACM Symposium on Document Engineering (DocEng) identified a number of important strategic objectives aimed at growing the conference and making it more attractive to young researchers. I proposed for DocEng to include a *doctoral consortium*, called ProDoc@DocEng, to attract PhD students whose doctoral theses are in an advanced stage of preparation and to give them an opportunity to present their work and receive constructive feedback from senior researchers. The Steering Committee agreed that this would indeed be a good idea and gave me the green light to implement my proposal and to act as chair. ProDoc@DocEng made its debut at DocEng 2013 in Florence (Italy). In the following sections I present the general idea behind ProDoc@DocEng, give a summary of the past two editions of the consortium, and outline the submission and review processes.

2. PRODOC@DOCENG

The motivation behind ProDoc@DocEng follows the general idea of doctoral consortia, which readers may know from other conferences; the main goals are:

- To provide constructive feedback and advice to the selected PhD students on their research project;

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- to give them the opportunity to meet experts from different backgrounds working on topics in the field of document engineering in a relaxed atmosphere;
- to foster interaction between PhD students and to stimulate the exchange of ideas among participants;
- to provide an opportunity to discuss research, supervision, the job market, and other career-related issues.

Specifically, we target doctoral students in their second year or later, who present their dissertation project and get feedback from a panel of senior researchers as well as from the general audience. The name “ProDoc” expresses both aspects: “Pro” refers to the professionals supporting the young researchers and to the Latin reading of “towards the doctoral degree.”

The doctoral consortium session is intended to provide constructive criticism and help doctoral students in formulating their research question, deciding about methods and approaches to use, and creating further ideas. It is designed as a place for doctoral students (also ones who do not participate actively) to learn about how to conduct a dissertation project and as a place for the general audience to learn about leading-edge research, the results of which might be presented at one of the next Symposia.

ProDoc@DocEng takes place on the first day of the Symposium, thus leaving ample opportunities to talk about the presented projects and to get in touch with potential readers or additional supervisors. Each participant presents their dissertation project, followed by feedback and questions. Participants of ProDoc@DocEng register for DocEng and can thus attend all sessions of the Symposium.

The feedback for students primarily comes from the ProDoc panel; panelists are senior researchers, who have worked or are currently working in the area of the presented project. Usually, one panelist is from the same research field as the PhD student and thus can give detailed feedback on the research topic, while the other panelists give feedback on general aspects of a doctoral dissertation.

Presenting your dissertation project in front of the DocEng audience has various aspects: The audience is not yet familiar with your specific research, but it works in the same field and knows related work, relevant approaches, etc. It is a good preparation for your thesis defense, as there might be a similar audience with similar questions, but the consortium is not an examination. The critical but friendly comments are intended to help you sharpen your research question, set a focus, make clear your contribution, and thus support you on your way towards a doctoral degree.

3. PAST EVENTS

So far, we have had two editions of ProDoc@DocEng: at DocEng 2013 in Florence (Italy) and at DocEng 2014 in Fort Collins, CO (USA). The number of submissions and accepted proposals is still quite small, but it is growing. The topics presented so far show the broad spectrum of research in document engineering.

In Florence, we had presentations by Vincent Gros, an industrial PhD student from Hachette Livre and Telecom ParisTech (France) on “Semantic Enrichment for Adaptive Dig-

ital Books” and by Kai Michael Höver from TU Darmstadt (Germany) on “Preserving, Exchanging, and Reusing Artifacts in Learning Ecosystems.” The panelists were Charles Nicholas from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (USA), Dick Bulterman from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands), and Maristella Agosti from the Università di Padova (Italy).

In Fort Collins, we also had two presentations. One by Jacek Siciarek from the Gdańsk University of Technology (Poland) on “Open Architecture of an Executable Digital Document” and one by Klaas Andries de Graaf from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam on “Ontology-Based Software Architecture Documentation.” The panelists were Peter King from the University of Manitoba (Canada), Steven Simske from HP, and Charles Nicholas.

All four students who presented their work got very valuable feedback during the session. But, perhaps even more importantly, they could talk to other participants on the following days and got many hints on how to proceed further. They also got several offers from researchers who agreed to serve as reader for the doctoral committee, and from colleagues willing to read preliminary drafts and comment on them. Students are encouraged to pose specific questions for further ideas or for this kind of help on a meta level, and the attendees of DocEng are very generous with providing help.

4. SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCEDURE

At DocEng 2015, which will take place in Lausanne (Switzerland) from September 8 to 11, 2015, we will have the third edition of ProDoc@DocEng. We hope to increase the number of participants we can accept for presentation, and therefore encourage all PhD students in document engineering to consider applying for ProDoc@DocEng.

Students interested in participating in ProDoc@DocEng submit a two-page document following the ACM SIG Proceedings format. These documents are intended to cover the background of the student (i.e., what they studied before or what they are working on at the moment), including some administrative information about their affiliation or employer, the (main) supervisor, specific requirements for a dissertation at their university, etc. The main part should give a brief overview of the dissertation project, including the research question, related work, the current status of the work, and links to aspects that have been published already. Submissions are not anonymous. Please see the Web site mentioned above for details.

Each submission is then reviewed by two or three members of the ProDoc@DocEng panel. The evaluation criteria obviously differ from general paper reviews and focus on originality, significance, maturity, and clarity: The reviewers judge whether the project is pertinent to the field of document engineering and whether it is mature enough to be presented at the consortium.

This year’s submission deadline is May 28, 2015 (i.e., one week after the deadline for short papers and application notes). Of course, students are free to also submit a regular paper to DocEng. ProDoc@DocEng participants are also eligible to apply for a Student Travel Award.

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